

## COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2021

### CABINET QUESTION TIME

#### 1. Question from Councillor M Steel to the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

As a former employee of GEC-Marconi, it was with great sadness that I hear that the Marconi Veteran volunteers, who maintain and exhibit a range of equipment located at Sandford Mill, have been told by Chelmsford City Council to remove all their equipment. Those that have visited the site on one of the open days, will know that the range and size of it is not something that can easily be moved in the short time given to them.

I understand that the future of the site is still to be fully determined, so with the site being currently closed to the public whilst the future is determined, I do not understand the urgent need to remove the Marconi equipment.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> September, Chelmsford will be hosting the British Science Festival with a range of activities and events. On the one hand, we intend to celebrate Science and Engineering, but on the other, so easily erase the magnificent contribution made by Chelmsford. In my 20 years at the company, I was involved in ground breaking design and manufacturing with products that led to today's technologies of the internet and cellular devices. When I see the things in Sandford Mill, I feel an emotional attachment to this history, made all the more poignant by the fact that the volunteers manage to keep some of it operating. I can't be the only one. This archive is not just for ex-employees and enthusiasts – it is the history of GEC's world-beating, ground breaking technology. I ask the City Council Administration to reconsider and, at the very least, continue to store the equipment whilst the future of the site is determined. If the equipment is removed now and returned to the attics and garages of the volunteers, it will never come back together again.

#### **Cabinet Member to respond**

#### 2. Question from Councillor M Steel to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

In the Cabinet Meeting, it was said that Admirals Park was already in effect operating as a Nature Reserve. Therefore, I ask what will actually change if it is formally designated as a Nature Reserve. For example, will it continue to host the beer festival, or will this be barred from operating in a Nature Reserve?

If it is barred, has the Administration given any thought to an alternative venue?

#### **Cabinet Member to respond**

### 3. Question from Councillor R Gisby to the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

It is accepted that there is an on-going consultation on the proposals for car parking charges at Hylands Park and Members are making representations to this.

Whilst we will no doubt be advised of the result of this consultation, this question relates to a matter of policy.

The proposed charges are completely different to those already in existence for Essex County Council Country Parks. To remind Members, for £75 per annum, or £60 for over 60's, you get, amongst other discounts, the following with Essex County Council

- Car Parking at 7 country parks for a whole year – Belhus Woods, Cudmore Grove, Danbury, Great Notley, Hadleigh, Thorndon and Weald.
- 2 days free parking for family or friend
- Discounts are various refreshment facilities in the Country Parks.

Could the Cabinet Member advise me whether the charging system adopted by ECC was considered by the City Council and the reason it was rejected?

#### **Cabinet Member to respond**

### 4. Question from Councillor R Whitehead to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Chelmsford Market is a very valuable asset and it has been much affected by the Covid pandemic, with footfall greatly reduced.

In particular the large number of people passing through it who work at County Hall and the Civic Centre is currently a small fraction of the usual number who use the Market.

The City Council did reduce rents for market traders but these have now gone back to previous figures.

However, as the number of shoppers is still way below what it was previously and will, despite the so-called 'Freedom Day' on Monday be likely to remain low, will the City Council again assist traders before many of them go out of business?

#### **Cabinet Member to respond**